



# WEATHER CROP



Cooperating with the Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services  
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Week ending March 29, 2009

## NEEDED RAIN ACROSS MUCH OF THE STATE

**WEATHER SUMMARY:** Rain fell last week over most of the State. Much of the Panhandle and northern counties reported rainfall in excess of three inches. Santa Rosa County reported 8.58 inches, Gadsden had 5.36, and Jackson received 4.67 inches. Alachua, Franklin, and Putnam counties all recorded amounts over 3 inches. Central Florida counties averaged between a quarter of an inch up to one inch while the southern areas had lesser amounts. Throughout the State high temperatures were in the mid-70s and 80s, with a few locations recording temperatures in the low 90s. Overall, temperatures were normal to four degrees above normal.

**FIELD CROPS:** Heavy rains in Santa Rosa and Escambia counties have brought fieldwork to a standstill, with some flooding reported. The wheat crop may have suffered some damage from wind and hail. St Johns potato growers reported that recent rainfalls have lessened the need for irrigation. Most fields have started to flower. Dade County growers were planting sweet potatoes, while nurseries reported good plant movement. Palms were being affected by rust disease. The Okeechobee County agent reported growers were cutting hay, with yields low, and quality fair. Reports showed soil moisture levels as adequate to surplus in the Panhandle and very short to adequate for all other regions of Florida.

Moisture Rating	Topsoil			Subsoil		
	This week	Last week	Last year	This week	Last week	Last Year
	<i>Percent</i>					
Very short	30	41	5	33	41	6
Short	46	41	36	38	36	39
Adequate	17	17	58	25	22	55
Surplus	7	1	1	4	1	0

**VEGETABLES:** Harvesting of winter vegetables started wrapping up while spring planting continued. Despite recent rain, many fields struggled with dry conditions and were irrigated. The Hernando County agent reported that blueberries were being harvested. In St Johns County, broccoli harvest was nearing the end. Cabbage harvest had good yields and fair quality. The Columbia County agent reported some melon planting on hold due to dry conditions. Hamilton County growers planted carrots, snap beans, and tomatoes. Other vegetables moving through the market were snap beans, cabbage, celery, sweet corn, eggplant, endive, escarole, greens, peppers, radishes, squash, and tomatoes.

**LIVESTOCK AND PASTURES:** Pasture condition was lower due to continued drought and supplemental hay feeding continued in all areas of the State. In the Panhandle and northern areas, pasture condition was mostly poor to fair. Pastures have not performed up to potential due to either too cool or too dry growing conditions. Summer perennial pasture and clover have started to grow following the last rain. Hay feeding picked up again due to drought-stressed forage growing conditions. Over half of the cattle were being fed supplemental hay due to the short pasture. The cattle condition was mostly fair to good. In the central areas, pasture was very poor to good with most in poor condition. Pasture was just starting to come back, but grass was short due to drought and cool weather. Cattle condition was very poor to good with most poor to fair. Pasture condition in the southwest was very poor to good with most in poor to fair condition. Light rain last week helped green up some pastures but drought was the limiting factor for forage growth. Statewide, cattle condition was very poor to excellent, spread fairly evenly from very poor to good.

Condition	Cattle		Pasture	
	This week	Last week	This week	Last week
	<i>Percent</i>			
Very poor	15	14	30	30
Poor	25	20	40	35
Fair	35	40	24	30
Good	24	25	5	5
Excellent	1	1	1	0

**CITRUS:** Warm, seasonal temperatures continued across the citrus areas ranging from the low 50s at night to the high 80s during the day. Quick moving thunderstorms for two days during the week brought almost an inch of rainfall to the central and western citrus producing regions. Other areas received one-tenth inch to one-half inch of rainfall for the week. All areas could still use more rain to offset the drought caused by several weeks of very dry conditions. Widespread spring citrus bloom has been observed by field personnel. Caretakers were busy fertilizing, applying pesticides, and irrigating on a regular basis. Several packinghouses were reporting they have finished or are planning to finish packing Honey tangerines in the next week or so. Early-midseason orange harvesting was relatively done for the season. Valencia orange harvesting picked up steadily over the past couple of weeks, but reports have come in that ratios were still low and inconsistent. Grapefruit harvesting was under a million boxes weekly with the majority of white grapefruit being processed with equal amounts of red grapefruit going to processing and fresh.

Estimated Boxes Harvested - Week Ended			
Crop	Mar 15	Mar 22	Mar 29
	<i>In thousands of 1-3/5 bushel boxes</i>		
Early and mid oranges	780	20	52
Temples	97	31	18
Valencia oranges	2,133	3,479	4,576
Navel oranges	1	2	3
Grapefruit	1,127	960	840
Tangelos	4	1	6
Sunburst tangerines	0	0	3
Honey tangerines	89	54	80

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